

Tom M Best/MCW/MACYS

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To

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Jon and Richard - Having met both of you as an active member of the Southgate Neighborhood Committee I wanted to appeal directly to you on the proposed new tax on parking downtown. I guess the saying, "just because you can doesn't mean you should" applies here. We all know that taxes get passed to the consumer. In this case it will be limited to consumers who choose to work and shop downtown.

As a member of the BID's Parking Committee we have discussed this issue twice. Both times the overwhelming response has been that this is a bad idea. We all felt it would hurt the businesses downtown making it more expensive to work, shop, eat and enjoy downtown activities. That being said the other issue is simply the fairness of it. The tax would target specific businesses that have made significant investments into a downtown they hope will thrive. Having been here for twenty years I can tell you that we have come a long way but we should not make assumptions that this will continue. Over the past 20-25 years many businesses that used to be downtown have relocated out to malls and strip malls. In this tough economic environment we don't want that cycle to continue. Here is a short list of the challenges already facing those of us who choose to stay and invest in the downtown:

1. Downtown businesses have dated buildings that are significantly more expensive to maintain.
2. Downtown businesses are challenged with more crime and graffiti.
3. Downtown businesses have taxed themselves with a BID that takes on many responsibilities and costs that would otherwise be handled by the city.
4. Downtown businesses, their employees and their customers are already paying for parking which is not an issue for other businesses.

The reality is that it costs more to be downtown. My question to the both of you and to the rest of the City Council is why would you consider making it even more so? It is my hope that while trying to make the right decision to help maintain some city services you don't make the wrong decision by hurting the essence of Spokane, and that is its downtown core.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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